

Unit 5/Week 7

Title: McBroom the Rainmaker

Suggested Time: 5 days (45 minutes per day)

Common Core ELA Standards: RL.5.1, RL.5.2, RL.5.4; W.5.4, W.5.9;
SL.5.1, SL.5.2; L.5.1, L.5.2, L.5.4, L.5.5

Teacher Instructions

Refer to the Introduction for further details.

Before Teaching

1. Read the Big Ideas and Key Understandings and the Synopsis. Please do **not** read this to the students. This is a description for teachers, about the big ideas and key understanding that students should take away **after** completing this task.

Big Ideas and Key Understandings

A positive attitude is important when facing challenges. McBroom is characterized as being determined and an extremely ingenious problem solver as he overcomes overwhelming adversities.

Synopsis

In this tall tale, Josh McBroom is fighting a drought and giant mosquitoes! McBroom's wonderful one acre farm is so dry that the hens are laying fried eggs and the cows are giving powered milk! Finally, Josh McBroom comes up with an ingenious plan to save the farm.

2. Read entire main selection text, keeping in mind the Big Ideas and Key Understandings.
3. Re-read the main selection text while noting the stopping points for the Text Dependent Questions and teaching Vocabulary.

During Teaching

1. Students read the entire main selection text independently.

2. Teacher reads the main selection text aloud with students following along. (Depending on how complex the text is and the amount of support needed by students, the teacher may choose to reverse the order of steps 1 and 2.)
3. Students and teacher re-read the text while stopping to respond to and discuss the questions and returning to the text. A variety of methods can be used to structure the reading and discussion (i.e.: whole class discussion, think-pair-share, independent written response, group work, etc.)

Text Dependent Questions

Text Dependent Questions	Answers
<p>McBroom the Rainmaker is an American tall tale. American tall tales are usually stories about overcoming hardships faced during frontier days. Most of the time there is a hero who uses supernatural powers or skills to solve a problem or overcome adversities. Tall tales stretch the truth and always include humorous exaggerations or events that couldn't really have happened. Who is the hero in this story? Who is telling the story? (Pg. 496)</p>	<p>Josh McBroom is the hero of the story and the teller of the story.</p>
<p>Foreshadowing is the use of clues or hints to suggest what will happen later in a story. What does McBroom say that gives clues or hints that the prairie mosquitoes will play a role in saving the farm from a drought? (Pg. 496)</p>	<p>McBroom says, "But I'm not going to say anything about those zing-zanging, hot tempered nee creatures. They rescued our farm from ruin during the Big Drought we had last year." In this passage, foreshadows the mosquitoes role in saving the farm.</p>
<p>A stranger on a mule passed by McBroom's farm and claimed he was attacked by woodpeckers. How did McBroom respond to his claim? How did McBroom describe the size of the mosquitoes? (Pg. 496)</p>	<p>McBroom said that there was no truth to the claim of being attacked by woodpeckers. He said he was attacked by common prairie mosquitoes, not woodpeckers. McBroom says that the mosquitoes grow so large that everyone had to use chicken wire for m</p>
<p>Reread page 497. McBroom claimed that the topsoil on his farm was remarkable and would grow anything. Give at least two examples from the text to support his claim.</p>	<p>McBroom claimed that the topsoil on his farm was remarkable and would grow anything because the soil produced four crops a day. The soil also made it possible to grow their own vegetable clocks. When Mr. McBroom's pocket watch fell on the remarkable topsoil, it grew down roots and grew into a three-dollar alarm</p>

<p>What was the problem facing McBroom’s farm? (Pg. 498)</p>	<p>As the days grew drier and drier, the farm’s was drying out. The topsoil was losing its ability to grow anything. If the drought continued, McBroom would not be able to grow his crops resulting in not being able to support his family.</p>
<p>When people exaggerate they stretch the truth and make claims that are not really possible. Authors use exaggeration for emphasis. Ex: “After seeing the ghost, the boy shook so hard his teeth rattled!” McBroom exaggerated when he described how dry it was on his farm. Reread page 499 and identify at least three examples of exaggeration.”</p>	<p>McBroom claimed the drought affected his farm in the following ways: The hens laid fried eggs. The watermelons began to fly like balloons because they were full of hot air. The cows were giving powdered milk. The water pump brought up dry steam. The boys caught dried catfish.</p>
<p>Ornery means bad tempered. Since the Big Drought parched or dried up the earth, the family couldn’t grow a crop of beets. Why did this make the mosquitoes ornery? (Pg. 499)</p>	<p>McBroom always planted a crop of beets to keep the mosquitoes and keep them from becoming ornery. The mosquitoes were used to feasting on the beets. Since the land was parched, there were no beets for the mosquitoes to eat, so the mosquitoes became extremely ornery.</p>
<p>Reread pages 500-502. The turning point of the story occurred when McBroom came up with a plan for tracking down a rain cloud. Summarize McBroom’s plan and describe the outcome. Use details from the text to support your answer.</p>	<p>McBroom got an idea when he saw the mosquito-eating yellow billed cuckoo. McBroom went to town to buy a cage and three wagons. He and his children rode to the dry topsoil. He placed a rain crow on the wagon. McBroom claimed the rain crow could smell rain from at least 60 miles away. The rain crow led them to a rain cloud. It began to rain. The dry topsoil was soaked and the wet topsoil back to his farm.</p>
<p>A simile is a comparison of two unlike objects using the words “like” or “as.” Ex: The child’s hands were as cold as ice. This simile compares the child’s hand to ice. The author used a simile to describe the size of the raindrops and another simile to describe the condition of the family. Identify both similes on page 502. What unlike objects are compared in each simile?</p>	<p>The first simile, “raindrops spattered as large as quarters,” compared the size of raindrops to quarters. The second simile, “got wet as fish,” compared the family to fish.</p>
<p>After McBroom arrived home and planted onion seeds in the wet topsoil, he said that the rich topsoil was “raring to go.” What did he mean? What began to happen? Use details from the text to support your answer. (Pg. 503)</p>	<p>Raring to go means that since the topsoil was now once again ready to grow anything! As soon as McBroom planted the onion seeds, the onions began to grow at an incredible rate of speed. Before McBroom could even load his shotgun the onion bulbs were bursting through the ground and quickly went from the size of pumpkins to the size of watermelons.</p>

<p>When the mosquitoes spied the onions they came swarming over McBroom’s farm. Instead of shooting the mosquitoes, McBroom poked his shotgun out the window and put a double charge of buckshot in the onion bulbs. Buckshot is the lead shot contained in shotgun shells. Why did McBroom decide to put a double load of buckshot in the onions instead of the mosquitoes? How does McBroom’s decision save his farm? (Pg. 504)</p>	<p>McBroom decided not to shoot the mosquitoes because there were too many of them. He decided to burn the onions because he knew that the terrible odor from the burning would run the mosquitoes away by burning their eyes. When the mosquitoes began to cry so much that they were almost flooded the farm. Now that the farm was free of mosquitoes, the remarkable topsoil began to produce amazing crops.</p>
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Vocabulary

	KEY WORDS ESSENTIAL TO UNDERSTANDING	WORDS WORTH KNOWING General teaching suggestions are provided
<p>TEACHER PROVIDES DEFINITION not enough contextual clues provided in the text</p>	<p>Page 499 - parched, ornery</p>	<p>Page 502 - frolic Page 503 - idle Page 504 - disposition, swarming</p>

<p>STUDENTS FIGURE OUT THE MEANING sufficient context clues are provided in the text</p>	<p>Page 496 - drought Page 497 - skeeters Page 499 - scorcher Page 503 - bulbs</p>	<p>Page 498 - moisture Page 501 - impatient Page 502 - squawking Page 503 - sowing</p>
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Culminating Task

- Re-Read, Think, Discuss, Write
- *“McBroom the Rainmaker” is a tall tale about Josh McBroom, who comes up with a clever plan to save his wonderful farm. McBroom is characterized throughout the story as being determined and an extremely ingenious problem solver. In two well-developed paragraphs, use at least two specific examples and quotes from the story to show how McBroom displayed his determination and his ingenious problem solving skills and how these qualities helped him to achieve his goal.*

Answer:

McBroom was determined to save his wonderful farm from the Big Drought that was drying out the farm’s remarkable topsoil. Each day he told his children, “Keep your eyes peeled for rain.” The children took turns in the tree house scanning the skies. McBroom couldn’t even sleep trying to think of a plan. One night, he heard the huge mosquitoes rattling the windows and hammering at the door. In the moonlight, he saw them chase a yellow-billed cuckoo. McBroom sat up in a hurry! An idea struck him! Glory be! He had a plan to break that drought! He quickly rented three wagons and told his children, “Shovels, my lambs! Heap these wagons full of top soil! He also placed a yellow-billed cuckoo in a bird cage. He remembered people calling the yellow-billed

cuckoo a “rain crow.” McBroom smiling said, “That rain crow can smell a downpour coming sixty miles away! We’re going to track down a rain cloud and wet this topsoil!” McBroom was so sure of his plan that he even told the children to pack their raincoats! These creative ideas and his commitment to not sleep until he had thought of a plan show just how important his farm was to him. He was resolute in achieving his goal.

Refusing to give up, day after day, McBroom and his children hauled the topsoil searching for a rain cloud, and the rain crow remained silent. At daybreak one morning, McBroom rose up laughing because the rain crow let out a loud, ear busting rain cry. He told the children to put on their rain coats and the downpour began. The rain cloud soaked the topsoil and the family scurried back home. As soon as they arrived, McBroom heard the roaring of the prairie mosquitoes. He quickly began to put his plan in motion by planting onions in the topsoil. The onions immediately grew as big as a small cow shed. Next, McBroom put a double charge of buckshot into the onions. “Handkerchiefs, everyone!” shouted McBroom. He knew that the smell of the onions would cause the mosquitoes’ eyes to flow like sprinkling cans and that’s just what happened. Mud puddles were everywhere. The mosquitoes’ onion tears almost flooded the farm. McBroom’s clever plan to use the mosquitoes’ tears to water the farm worked and the remarkable topsoil once again began to produce amazing crops. Although this was not an ordinary plan, it was the type of plan that helped McBroom to achieve his goal. And it showed that he was willing to do whatever it took to save his farm.

Additional Tasks

- *A colloquialism is an informal way of speaking related to a specific location. Create a list of regional colloquialisms used throughout the story.*

Answer: young’uns, skeeters, gallinippers, larger’n, rapscallions, Pa, varmints, my lambs, ‘em, smaller’n, rarin’, Mercy!

- *Compare modern day storm chasers with the McBroom tall tale.*

- *This story also lends itself to activities with similes, and exaggeration. Students tend to be very literal and have a hard time with figurative language. Have students search the text for examples and define what the author means.*

Answer:

- o “The thirsty skeeters stuck in their long beaks like straws.” This compares their beaks to a straw. Page 497
- o The watermelons became so light that they began floating in the air like balloons. This compares how light the watermelons became because all of the water inside dried up. 499
- o “The first raindrops splattered as large as quarters.” Comparing the raindrops to quarters exemplifies that the raindrops were extremely large. Page 502
- o “Our dried-up topsoil soaked up raindrops like a sponge.” This shows how the dry soil absorbed the rain like a sponge.

Examples of hyperbole (exaggeration) are:

- o “The young’uns had planted a plum tree, but all it would grow was prunes.” This means that it was incredibly dry. Page 498
- o Their cow “began giving powdered milk.” This is showing that it was so hot and dry that the cow’s milk turned into powdered milk. Page 499
- o “The sun came out so hot that our hens laid fried eggs.” This means it was very hot outside. Page 499
- o “Our topsoil’s so dry it’s gone in reverse. It’s shrinking things.” This means that the soil was so dry that instead of growing things the soil went in reverse and made things smaller. Page 500
- o “Our wonderful one-acre farm might shrink to a square foot.” This means that the land is drying up. Page 500

Note to Teacher

- Students need to understand that this story is a tall tale. It isn’t meant to be realistic. It is filled with exaggerations that could never take place. Tall tales occur in an ordinary setting, have

some truth to them, and have unpredictable or surprise endings. As early settlers moved west, they frequently faced challenges. These early settlers often told about their challenges in humorous stories called tall tales.

Name _____ Date _____

“McBroom the Rainmaker”

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4. Reread page 497. McBroom claimed that the topsoil on his farm was remarkable and would grow anything. Give at least two examples from the text to support his claim.

5. What was the problem facing McBroom's farm? (Pg. 498)

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9. A simile is a comparison of two unlike objects using the words "like" or "as." Ex: The child's hands were as cold as ice. This simile compares the child's hand to ice. The author used a simile to describe the size of the raindrops and another simile to describe the condition of the family. Identify both similes on page 502. What unlike objects are compared in each simile?

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